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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ASTANA 000668

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: AMBASSADOR'S NOVEMBER 25 MEETING WITH
FM TOKAYEV

REF: A. STATE 185480

[1](#)B. STATE 185757

[1](#)C. ASTANA 651

[1](#)D. ALMATY 1210

Classified By: Amb. John Ordway, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a November 25 meeting with Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev in Astana, the Ambassador proposed policy discussions on the permanent disposition of BN-350 spent fuel, expressed disappointment at Kazakhstan's voting record in the Third Committee, and offered expanded training opportunities for Kazakhstani diplomats at the Marshall Center. Tokayev indicated that Kazakhstan would support the resolution on Myanmar in the UNGA, and expressed interest in sending mid-level diplomats to the Marshall Center. The Ambassador also commended Kazakhstan's readiness to take back its citizens detained at Guantanamo and to expand its engagement with Afghanistan. Tokayev, who now has the interagency lead on cooperation with Afghanistan, described plans to pursue a variety of economic projects in [1](#)2007. Tokayev informed the Ambassador that President Nazarbayev would call for sweeping reform of the Commonwealth of Independent States at the organization's November 28 summit in Minsk, despite Russian opposition. Tokayev promised to look into the status of an agreement to permit political party training by U.S.-funded NGOs. The Foreign Minister agreed that the November 21 demolition of Hare Krishna homes had been conducted in a cruel and ill-advised manner, and informed the Ambassador that the Security Council would discuss the issue in the near future. Finally, Tokayev shared his concerns regarding China's aggressive push to invest in Kazakhstan. End summary.

Permanent Disposition of BN-350 Spent Fuel

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Ambassador told FM Tokayev that during President Nazarbayev's September 28 meeting in Washington with Secretary of Energy Bodman, Nazarbayev had agreed to discuss

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options for the permanent disposition of the spent fuel from the BN-350 reactor once it is moved to Kurchatov. The U.S. would like to hold policy discussions on this issue in Astana in January, to be followed by technical discussions (Refs A and B). The Ambassador told Tokayev that he would also discuss the matter with Security Council Chairman Murat

Tazhin and Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Bakhyt Izmukhambetov. Tokayev indicated that the proposal was reasonable.

UN Resolutions

13. (C) The U.S. had hoped for greater cooperation from Kazakhstan on a series of human rights resolutions in the UNGA's Third Committee, the Ambassador noted. While we were pleased that Kazakhstan had supported the resolution on the DPRK, we were disappointed that Kazakhstan supported a number of no-action motions on other important resolutions and abstained on the Myanmar resolution. FM Tokayev said that Kazakhstan would support the Myanmar resolution in the UNGA, but found it impossible to break ranks with fellow CIS members Uzbekistan and Belarus. He claimed that Uzbek President Karimov refused to attend the recent summit of Turkic nations primarily because Turkey had supported UN resolutions on Uzbekistan in the past.

CIS Summit

14. (C) Tokayev said that the GOK was preparing intensively for the November 28 summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Minsk, as Kazakhstan currently chairs the organization. President Nazarbayev will speak about the need to reform the organization, make it more compact and efficient, and focus it more clearly on core issues. Initiatives such as the proposed free trade area were a waste of time, according to Tokayev. Kazakhstan did not agree with Belarusian President Lukashenko's recent call to disband the organization, but did believe serious reform was necessary.

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Kazakhstan would pursue reform despite the fact that Russia is opposed and is urging fellow CIS members to avoid "radical" changes. Tokayev described current CIS Secretary General Rushaylo as "destructive." Tokayev argued that the fact that all heads of state except for Turkmenbashi were planning to attend the upcoming summit, despite their bilateral differences, underscored the important role of the organization as a forum for dialogue.

Kazakhstani Engagement in Afghanistan

15. (SBU) The Ambassador asked Tokayev about his role as the interagency lead on Kazakhstan's engagement with Afghanistan. Tokayev said that much progress had already been made, in part thanks to encouragement from the U.S., and Kazakhstan planned to continue to expand its contacts. Tokayev noted that Nazarbayev had briefed UK Prime Minister Blair on Kazakhstan's plans during their November 20 meeting in London. At this stage, according to Tokayev, the focus is on investment and economic projects. From a political and financial point of view it is "early" to discuss participation in a PRT, he added. Tokayev said that many experts from Kazakhstan will visit Afghanistan in 2007 to discuss cooperation in areas such as oil, gas, and copper. He noted that some Afghans had told him that, because they found it difficult to work with large U.S. oil and gas firms and did not want to work with Russian firms, they were eager for cooperation with Kazakhstani firms. He had already heard from several firms that were eager to explore options in Afghanistan.

Training of Kazakhstani Diplomats

16. (SBU) The Ambassador proposed increasing the number of

junior and mid-level Kazakhstani diplomats who are trained each year at the Marshall Center. He noted that the 12-week National Security course, offered three times per year, would be an excellent preparation for diplomats who would have a role in an eventual OSCE chairmanship. Tokayev said that he was quite interested in the proposal and that the MFA would definitely send staff to the Marshall Center for training.

17. (C) He informed the Ambassador that Kazakhstan receives significant pressure from both Russia and China not to participate in Marshall Center activities because of the organization's alleged work to undermine the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Kazakhstan realizes that the allegations are baseless and will continue to work with the Marshall Center, Tokayev said.

Guantanamo Detainees

18. (SBU) The U.S. was very pleased to have received Kazakhstan's diplomatic note containing the necessary assurances to permit the return of its citizens held at Guantanamo, the Ambassador said. We will work with Kazakhstan to coordinate their transfer. The Ambassador noted that we had heard that Kazakhstani security forces wanted to visit Guantanamo once more before the transfer takes place; if that is still the case, the Kazakhstani Embassy in Washington should contact the Department of Defense through established channels. Tokayev said he would follow up on the issue.

Political Party Training

19. (SBU) Despite the apparent good will of the Presidential Administration and the Ministry of Justice, not to mention the commitment expressed in the joint statement issued during President Nazarbayev's visit to Washington, no progress has been made on an agreement to permit U.S.-funded NGOs to provide training to Kazakhstani political parties, the Ambassador said. Tokayev promised to check on the status of interagency approval of the draft memorandum of understanding.

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Demolition of Hare Krishna Homes

110. (C) The Ambassador noted that the legal status of the Hare Krishna commune outside of Almaty had been the subject of a protected court battle, and that the Ministry of Justice had established a special commission to review the situation and propose an equitable resolution. The U.S. was therefore puzzled and disappointed by the local authorities' decision to carry out the demolition orders before the special commission had issued any recommendations (Ref C). We were also shocked by the harsh way in which the demolitions were carried out on less than 24 hours notice, during severe winter weather. Tokayev described the demolitions as "cruel," noting that he had taken a question on the incident from a CNBC reporter during a press conference in London. Tokayev said that while the court's decision was clear, the way the demolitions were carried out had raised many questions in the government. Security Council Chairman Tazhin, who had also been briefed on the incident while in London with Nazarbayev, planned to hold a special Security Council session with all law enforcement agencies to instruct them "not to be so stupid" in how they handle such cases in the future.

China

¶11. (C) In a one-on-one conversation following the main meeting, FM Tokayev told the Ambassador that Kazakhstan was concerned about China's very aggressive push to invest in a wide range of projects. As a result, Nazarbayev would sign only very general framework agreements during his December trip to Beijing. Kazakhstan fears both Chinese economic pressure and the potential for large numbers of migrants, Tokayev said. In large projects such as the Ekibastuz power plant (Ref D), Tokayev said, Kazakhstan would be more comfortable with U.S. than Chinese investors. (Note: Tokayev's comments largely echoed the concerns that Deputy Prime Minister Masimov, who like Tokayev is also an expert on China, expressed to the Ambassador on November. 18. End note.)
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